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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2464

June 8, 1990

IS THE WORLD FACING A FOOD CRISIS? At the height of the African famine in 1985, only a few people voiced concern about the adequacy of the world's food supply. Now, many believe a world food shortage is looming. Recent USDA analyses yield some disquieting observations:

- in many developing nations, food deficits have grown despite improving food production;
- developing-country cereal import bills & the cost of food aid are greatly influenced by world cereal stocks, particularly wheat and in the last few years, wheat output has declined;
- exceptionally low world cereal stocks have caused international prices to rise sharply;
- and countries' food deficits translate into food crises when assistance fails to arrive.

The current issue of National Food Review addresses these problems. For a copy, call: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445. Contact: Ray W. Nightingale (202) 786-1705.

ARE FARMERS ROTATING CROPS? Concern that continuous cropping is a prevalent practice prompted USDA Economists Stan Daberkow & Mohinder Gill to study the three-year planting practices of seven major crops (corn, winter wheat, spring wheat, soybeans, rice, cotton & potatoes). They found that at least 80 percent of the nation's 1988 harvested cropland was planted in crop rotations for the two previous years. The exception is cotton. About 50 percent of the 1988 cotton acreage had been used continuously for that crop for at least three years. Contact: Stan Daberkow & Mohinder Gill (202) 786-1464.

NO GAMBLING ALLOWED -- Scientists who name bugs can't gamble, they need a system that pays off every time. "Sometimes naming insects is not as easy as it would seem," says Douglas R. Miller, a USDA expert in identifying insects, "since two insects that look alike might be different species." Worldwide, scientists have named only about one million species of insects. "There may be 10 to 50 million more," Miller says. Contact: Douglas R. Miller (301) 344-3138.

TAME MAYHAW? Scientists at Louisiana Ag Experiment Station are trying to make it feasible to grow the wild mayhaw commercially. Charles Johnson says the mayhaw grows throughout the eastern U.S. & Canada & is popular with home canners who make jelly from it. The small fruit is shaped like an apple & is a brilliant waxy red when ripe. Contact: Charles Johnson (318) 64-2662.



NAFB HELD ITS SOUTHEAST REGIONAL MEETING in Myrtle Beach, S.C., May 31 - June 3 (top photo). Jim Mills (retired) won the golf classic and Nancy & Doug Thomas (Progressive Farmer Network, Starkville, Miss.) won the fishing tournament. Left photo: Johnnie Hood (WPTF/Southern Farm Network, Raleigh, N.C.), Jerry Gehman (WASG, Atmore, Ala.), S.E. Region V.P., & Ken Tanner (WRAL-TV/Tobacco Radio Net, Raleigh, N.C.) organized the events. Right photo: Eric Parsons (USDA Ag Update) shot footage of the tour's visit to blueberry & catfish farms. (USDA Photos.)

SOVIET AG IMPORTS -- The USSR was the second largest importer in U.S. farm products in 1989, buying a record \$3.6 billion. The U.S. supplied nearly a fifth of Soviet ag imports & about two-thirds of grain imports. The U.S. continues as the predominant supplier of the USSR's hard-currency non-tropical imports. Soviet ag imports could fall somewhat in 1990, say USDA economists. Lower grain imports & prices and lower sugar imports might offset higher meat & vegetable oil imports. The USSR's ability to pay for ag imports could be strained further, if the Soviets continue to push consumer & equipment imports. Contact: Kathryn Zeimet (202) 786-1621.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1722 -- On this edition of Agriculture USA, Brenda Curtis talks with Montgomery Co., Md., Extension Economist Susan Morris about an easy way to organize & keep important records. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1204 -- Buying time-shares; pesticide & drug residues in meat; Soviet food prices; file organization made easy; mowing your lawn. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE #1711 -- USDA News Highlights; U.S.-Soviet food processing agreement signed; farmer-owned reserve; doing business in the Soviet Union; a farm chemical ban. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1323 -- New antibiotics discovered; citrus "a-peel;" leafhopper biocontrol; fire ant toxicants; preventing nitrogen leeching. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., June 18, milk production; Tues., June 19, cattle on feed, U.S. ag trade update; Wed., June 20, ag outlook; Thurs., June 21, catfish, cherry production; Fri., June 22, livestock update, ag resources; Mon., June 25, poultry production.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(June 7, 9 & 11, 1990)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on the "Take Pride in America" Memorial; Will Pemble takes a look at genetic engineering; Lisa Telder reports on supermicroscopes.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter on U.S. investments in Soviet food industries; Norton Strommen on the latest weather & crop update; Scott Sanford on cotton & wool; Steve Macdonald on U.S. exports & trade; Bob Fondahn on U.S. export opportunities in the United Kingdom.

NEXT WEEK -- Pat O'Leary reports on the "father" of USDA's Forest Service.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D
MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

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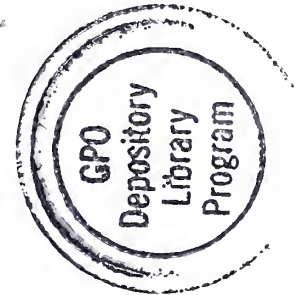
TORNADOES...in Indiana caused extensive damage to several rural homes and buildings, says Skip Davis (WASK, Lafayette). Most of the storms hit the state's southern area where fields were beginning to dry from two weeks of flooding. It's getting late to use even short-season varieties of corn & soybeans and some producers may not be able to harvest a crop this year. Skip says a new facility for processing hogs is being constructed in his area. Japan will be a major market.

COOL WEATHER...in the Northwest is preventing rapid growth of of winter and spring wheat, but when summer temperatures arrive, producers expect excellent crops, says Rick Haines (Northern Ag Network, Billings, Mont.). Rick also says business leaders in some small towns are telling him they expect a downward effect on local economies from land taken out of production in the Conservation Reserve Program.

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Radio-TV Division
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OUR THANKS...to Ray Wilkinson (WRAL-TV/Tobacco Radio Net, Raleigh, N.C.) for serving as closing speaker at the Agriculture Communicators in Education/USDA Office of Public Affairs Spring Workshop in Washington, D.C., last month. Ray, who uses humor to make his point, had them rolling in the aisles.

FOOD SAFETY...food labeling, monitoring pesticide residues and other hot topics will be presented at the 1990 Journalists' Conference, June 25-26, in the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., by officials of USDA, the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Government leaders in food safety and nutrition will speak. Broadcasters are welcome. Call our Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445 for registration information.


VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division